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622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so
[538] foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater import-
[183] ance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture; for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with
● 781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapŏn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions.

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest.

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects.

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the

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781 negative results which occurred through not following their
787 instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

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[78] These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace' consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo. This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom; in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representation of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and readings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began; then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use); and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbutipkū* round her image were handed out for all to wave over themselves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar. It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in procession across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments, as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

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241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

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522 witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): 831 If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then 842 began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly [781] and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of 522 sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and 831 adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation 831 with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

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and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

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[796] The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used 809] for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

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796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them, and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
● [781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[768 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

1 [ie. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapsor.--Analyst]

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked.

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell.

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain.

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be

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who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

I noticed that amongst the seed for planting were three potatoes. These were also to be planted in the field for the purpose of providing seed for next year's crop. I suggested that so few a number would be lost sight of in so large a field. Jiroong agreed: he usually planted them in the field outside his house, but was trying them here to see what happened. There is no ceremony in connection with planting the first seed; nor does it matter whether men or women do the planting. To-day the actual planting was being done by women; but this was of no significance.

Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice-planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of *Mayel Rum*, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

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243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781 868 857] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 533 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
● [781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

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cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [78] ●
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself
came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of
the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any
way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's
Pi-bo got up and made a short speech. While this was in
progress general conversation ceased: but before it was
finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [83]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking
again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony
of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed.
By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest
was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in
the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms
were now completely filled with people and the smoke was
so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the
room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin
state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring
peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [52]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of
drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still
talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived
Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the
same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the
crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front
of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce
anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene,
since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal
was being prepared and would later be served to all the
guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among
the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight
in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

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While the feasting was going on outside the monastery the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass *dorje*, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again:

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law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and intermittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a

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generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.

[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

776 The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
[773] tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
● [781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) and earth."[56]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār Basti gives us an illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

56. op. cit. p. 349 sq.

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-ca-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." "Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initiation. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[174] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[178] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[176] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.